



Building for the future by listening *now*.

September 4, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR FIRST NATIONS' TRUST FUND

A series of Regional Engagement meetings being carried out to determine the future of the *New Relationship Trust* is now nearly at the half-way point, with consultations completed in four out of 11 communities. Feedback received at the meetings to date has identified a diverse array of spending priorities for First Nations communities, including education, language and culture, healing, job creation and economic development.

The **New Relationship Trust** is a not-for-profit organization that was established last spring. Its purpose is to help First Nations in BC achieve self-determination through the exercise of their aboriginal title, exercise their jurisdiction over land and resources, and develop the capacity to address socio-economic inequalities faced by their members. The Trust received an initial contribution of \$100 million from the Province under Premier Gordon Campbell, and the first Board of Directors is seeking feedback from First Nations communities to determine the top priorities for the fund.

To date, meetings have been held in Masset, Prince Rupert, Terrace and Port Hardy. Some of the highlights from the meetings were as follows:

- Community leaders in Haida Gwaii (Masset) spoke of the need to encourage their people to re-connect with their traditional lands and culture, as well as the need for social and cultural programs;
- In Prince Rupert, a strong contingency of off-reserve First Nations people spoke of the need to support those living in urban environments, particularly through health care and employment programs;
- Just a few of the priorities identified by First Nations leaders in Terrace were education and training, youth programs, and job creation.

- The Port Hardy meeting focused on the need for revenue-sharing with industry and government, and the challenges that coastal Nations face with lack of land resources and cash flow.

Six more meetings will take place in September, as follows:

Fort St. John	September 11	9 am - 3 pm	Treaty 8 Association Boardroom
Port Alberni	September 12	9 am - 3 pm	Maht Mahs Gym
Prince George	September 13	9 am - 3 pm	Native Friendship Centre
Vancouver	September 14	9 am - 3 pm	Aboriginal Friendship Centre
Kamloops	September 19	9 am - 3 pm	Sk'elep School of Excellence
Cranbrook	September 22	9 am - 3 pm	St. Eugene Mission Resort
Atlin	September 26	9 am - 3 pm	Atlin Inn

Attendees are requested to RSVP by telephone, toll free to 1-877-922-3338.

Summaries of the regional meetings are posted to the Trust web site, www.newrelationshiptrust.ca, under 'Voices.' The complete schedule and Agenda for the meetings can be found under 'Participate.'

Once all the meetings are completed, the Trust Board of Directors will use the feedback gathered to create a 3-year strategic plan. The plan will outline the priorities and operational objectives of the Trust, and define a spending vs. investment strategy. It's important that communities participate in the process now, as the Trust is in its formative stage.

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General information:

Web site: www.newrelationshiptrust.ca

Toll free #: 1-877-922-3338

Members of the media are invited to attend a regional engagement meeting in your area. Please join us for lunch for an interview with meeting facilitator Jacob Beaton and / or a member of the Trust Board of Directors.

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